

Understanding Ramadan

Sensitivity Key During Holy Month

By Spc. Andy Miller
122nd MPAD

CAMP AL-TAHREER, Baghdad, Iraq - Based on the lunar calendar, the annual Muslim holy month of Ramadan is slated to begin on or about Oct. 16, depending on when astronomers first sight the new moon. Because of this, Ramadan begins at slightly different times, depending on one's geographic origin.

For more than a billion Muslims around the world, Ramadan is observed as a 'month of blessing', marked by prayer, fasting and charity. Islamic history proclaims Ramadan as the month when Allah revealed the first verses of the Qu'ran, the holy

book of Islam, to Muslim's highest prophet, Muhammad, in 610 A.D. Recitations, fasting and charity are encouraged during this time as spiritual activities that can bring a Muslim follower closer to Allah.

"It helps them achieve or come to know piety. And basically show their understanding, or appreciation for those who have less than they have," said Capt. Ray Buenteo, a civil affairs planner with Headquarters Company, 1st Cavalry Division.

Buenteo said it is important for Soldiers and other Westerners in Iraq to gain an understanding of Ramadan and other aspects of Muslim religion if they want to



AP

U.S. Navy sailors of Islamic faith pray aboard ship on the first day of Ramadan.

understand Middle Eastern culture. Religion has a prominent influence on Middle Eastern culture. More than what many are accustomed to in Western culture,

he said.

"In Muslim society...everything you do in your day is guided by the Islamic religion," Buenteo

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Turn on the Lights, 10,000 Get Power

By Spc. Jan Critchfield
122nd MPAD

BAGHDAD, Iraq - An 8th Engineer Battalion project to provide electricity to 10,000 residents of three Zaphernia district neighborhoods was officially completed October 2. The project is a part of the 1st Cavalry Division's ongoing effort to improve quality of living and safety in the Iraqi capital.

"[The division is] trying to improve the essential services for the people-sewer systems, drinking water, electricity, and trash collection," said Lt. Col. Brian Dosa, commander of the 8th

Engineers. "This project will allow people to have safe, reliable electrical service instead of illegally tapping, which is dangerous."

Most residents of Baghdad, and until recently the residents of these three neighborhoods, drew power from an outdated and over-taxed Saddam-era power network using improvised and often dangerous wiring.

"We did a poll in Baghdad. Second to security, electricity is the most important thing to people here," Dosa said.

"This project has nothing to do with power generation," Dosa said. "This is a project to increase distribu-

tion. We're working on distribution so electricity gets to people safely and efficiently."

After the Zaphernia district council identified the need for the new power network, the 8th Engineers contracted three local engineers to oversee the project, which totaled \$1.1 million in funds allocated to infrastructure renovations in Iraq by the U.S. government. Over the next three months, nearly 200 local laborers and technicians installed the network needed to supply electricity to approximately 2500 homes in the three neighborhoods.

"We try to not only improve essential services,

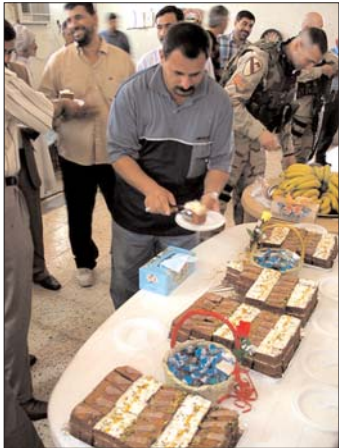
but also employ local workers," Dosa said.

Existing high-tension lines that connect the area with the rest of Baghdad, whose capabilities were severely limited by looting, were also renovated as a part of the project.

"There are probably two main concerns in Baghdad security and basic services. We believe the two are related," Dosa said. "If the quality of living is better, the people will have more confidence in their new government."

Dosa also noted that security has improved in the Zaphernia area since projects

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By Spc. Jan Critchfield, 122nd MPAD

Locals, community leaders, and Soldiers enjoy cake at a ribbon cutting ceremony celebrating the completion of a \$1.1 million electrical network in Baghdad's Zaphernia neighborhood. The project is part of the 1st Cavalry Division's ongoing effort to improve quality of living and safety in the Iraqi capital, and will bring power to 2,500 homes.

2500 Local Homes Have Power Now

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to improve essential services began there several months ago.

"I think this is because we've shown the people in Zaphernia that we're going to make progress," he said, citing the fact that before multinational force-supported

projects began, there were no sewers in the area.

"[This project] is a great accomplishment for the people of Zaphernia and the [Baghdad] Ministry of Electricity," Dosa said. "We think the future is bright. We're making tremendous improvements."

Soldiers Show Respect for Religion

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said. "In order to understand the culture in the Middle East, or particularly in Iraq, you have to understand some aspects of their religion.

"Having an understanding for it, doesn't necessarily mean you have to agree to it. It helps you do your job. Its building relationships, and you can't build a relationship in this country unless you understand the people," he added.

Cpl. Michael Quintana, a 1st Cavalry Division chaplain's assistant, is in Iraq for his second tour and will experience Ramadan for the third consecutive year. For him, understanding the local culture goes hand in hand with showing respect for the local people.

"It's a respect thing as a

Soldier," Quintana said. "For example if somebody doesn't celebrate Christmas, it's still important to respect somebody that does. It's the same thing."

According to cultural advisor John Houston, who lived in Muslim Egypt for 16 years, Muslims will likely take less offense from non-Muslims visiting the Middle East who show respect

toward their religion. This can mean observing local customs regarding dress, and showing sensitivity toward Muslims who are fasting.

While fasting, the Muslim practitioner will not allow anything, including cigarettes and liquids, to pass their lips. The fast lasts from dawn to dusk every day during the month of Ramadan.

"If you have something

to eat, try to do it as privately as possible and keep in mind the fact that people around you are very likely fasting," Houston said. "Its appreciated when you show some respect for what they're doing by not eating while they're fasting."

Houston added that during the month, religion plays a more prominent than usual role in Muslim life. He thinks this could heighten an awareness of political issues that are seen in Muslim culture as aggression against their religion. The Israeli-Palestine conflict, the Multi-National Force presence in Iraq, and what some Muslims perceive as the invasion of Western culture, will likely come to the forefront of Muslim thought during this time, he said.

WAYNE NEWTON

VARIETY TOUR

| Date | Time | Location |
|-----------|------|-----------------|
| 19 OCT 04 | 1900 | Camp Liberty PX |

Useful Iraqi Words/Phrases

Where can I find a cafe?

ayn ajid maqha

Tuesday
High: 98
Low: 70



Wednesday
High: 98
Low: 72



Thursday
High: 96
Low: 70



Weather information provided by 1CD Staff Weather Office (SWO)

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News Notes

11-Year-Old Takes Car 200 Miles

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. (AP) - An 11-year-old boy who told authorities he was upset about being bullied at school took off in the family car on an odyssey that ended more than 200 miles away on the other side of the state. Wearing shorts and a T-shirt, the boy left his suburban Kansas City home early Tuesday, driving 92 miles to Bethany, a northwest Missouri community in an area where he used to hunt with his father. He stopped there at a convenience store for some chips and a soft drink, then drove off aimlessly, following several other highways before ending up 135 miles away in northeast Missouri's Macon County.

'Here I Come to Save the Day!'

EDMOND, Okla. (Reuters) - An Oklahoma man desperate to save his marriage by appearing like a hero to his wife ended up in police custody on suspicion of staging a crime where he hired burglars and foiled their fake robbery attempt, police said Friday. According to police, Trent Spencer, a high school teacher, paid two students \$100 each to break into his house and try to make off with a stereo. The masked students tied his wife with duct tape and her husband was in the house just in time to foil the supposed crime, police said. Spencer attacked the two in a choreographed fight, even hitting one with a board he cut to break in half.



Austin American-Statesman

Dancers with Tropical Productions perform a Tahitian number during the second annual Philippine-Pacific Island Festival and Friendship Day at Fiesta Gardens in Austin, Texas on Sunday.

25,555 New Voters in Arkansas

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (Democrat-Gazette) - Southwest Little Rock residents Desiree Hampton, 23, Amber Mendoza, 20, and many of their friends recently tried something new. They registered to vote.

"I figure people fought for the right for me to vote. I should take advantage of it," Mendoza said. She and Hampton said they think this election is important. And they don't want to be left on the sidelines.

They have a lot of company this year.

New registered voters, many of them young and living in urban, low-income neighborhoods, have expanded Pulaski County's voter rolls by 10 percent since the beginning of the year, adding an unpredictable but potentially significant force to the Nov. 2 general election.

The increase in registered voters mirrors trends

in counties across the state, although Pulaski County's sheer numbers dwarf the others. More than a third of the new voters in Pulaski County are in the 18-25 age group.

An Arkansas Democrat-Gazette analysis of the county's voter-registration database shows that 25,555 voters were added to the rolls between Jan. 1 and Sept. 29, just five days before registration ended.

That's roughly double the number of new registered voters compared with four years ago. In 2000, 12,429 Pulaski County residents entered the system for the first time. Pulaski County has the largest pool of registered voters in the state with about 255,000 in its database.

Presidential election years motivate people to register. Secretary of state officials say the numbers are up statewide, but there has not been a spectacular



Democrat-Gazette

Recently registered voter Desiree Hampton holds her daughter Jennifer, 1, outside their southwest Little Rock home. Hampton said she believes this presidential election is important and that "if you don't vote, you can't complain" about the results. bump.

"We've certainly got a lot in the last month, but that is typical of an election year," said Janet Miller, director of elections. The state will not have a final count until later in October, Miller said.

Pats Win 19th for Record

FOXBORO, Mass. (AP) - Bill Belichick let a rare smile crease his face before reminding his New England Patriots what their record winning streak meant.

"He said, 'Congratulations on the streak, great job. Now we've got to think about Seattle,' " safety Rodney Harrison said.

At least their dour coach, who downplayed the streak all season, gave the Patriots some time to savor their NFL record 19th straight win, 24-10 over the winless Miami Dolphins on Sunday, before they start preparing for their next game against the Seahawks.

"It doesn't mean anything right now because we are still in the middle of the season," cornerback Ty Law said in a very quiet locker room. "The fruit will



New England Patriots safety Rodney Harrison (37) celebrates a third quarter sack of Miami Dolphins quarterback Jay Fiedler at Gillette Stadium Sun.

taste a little bit sweeter if we can give ourselves an opportunity to play for another championship."

The Patriots (4-0) won with two touchdown passes by Tom Brady, who had his worst statistical start as a pro, and two turnovers by offensively inept Miami.

The Dolphins trailed

24-10 before reaching the New England 1-yard line on their last series. But quarterback Jay Fiedler hurt his ribs and back on a 12-yard sack and, two plays later, A.J. Feeley suffered a concussion as he threw a fourth-down incompleteness and was hit by Rosevelt Colvin.

Braves Make Comeback, Force Game 5

HOUSTON (AP) - John Smoltz, Adam LaRoche and J.D. Drew saved the Atlanta Braves from another quick playoff exit.

The Braves pounced on Houston's bullpen as soon as Roger Clemens was gone, rallying from a three-run deficit for a 6-5 victory Sunday that tied the best-of-five NL series at two games apiece.

LaRoche hit a tying, three-run homer in the sixth inning and Drew singled home the go-ahead run in the ninth, handing the Astros their latest agonizing loss in October and forcing the series back to Atlanta for Game 5 on Monday.

"We get to go back home and the plane ride's a lot easier," Smoltz said. "We worked very hard to



Atlanta Braves' John Smoltz, left, and catcher Eddie Perez celebrate after they defeated the Houston Astros.

get home-field advantage and we need to take care of it. I feel like we got a break today."

Jaret Wright, the Game 1 loser, starts for the Braves

on Monday at Turner Field against 20-game winner Roy Oswalt, who didn't get a decision in Game 2 and will pitch on three days' rest.

Working on short rest himself, Clemens left after five innings with a 5-2 lead, but the Braves rallied to snap Houston's 19-game home winning streak. It was another wrenching postseason loss for the Astros, still looking to win a playoff series for the first time in their 43-season history.

"Streaks are streaks, they've got to come to an end some time," Braves manager Bobby Cox said.

Houston dropped to 1-5 in postseason Game 4s and lost their first game at home since Aug. 22 against the Chicago Cubs

In Brief

Rodman's Image has hurt his career

MONTERREY, Mexico (AP) - Former NBA star Dennis Rodman said his b a d - b o y

image may be hindering his attempts at a comeback to professional basketball. "They think I'm uncoachable and I don't know why," Rodman said. "I'm just a free and independent person." Rodman, 43, hasn't played pro basketball since 2000 when he was waived by the NBA's Dallas Mavericks after a 29-day stint with the team.



Sooners Use Texas to Improve

DALLAS (AP) - Texas coach Mack Brown thinks this Oklahoma squad might just be better than the one that dominated his team a year ago. The reason wasn't the score - the second-ranked Sooners beat the Longhorns 12-0 on Saturday, compared with a 65-13 blowout last season. Rather, it was the abundance of talent for Oklahoma (5-0, 2-0 Big 12) that made the biggest impression on Brown. Quarterback Jason White, last year's Heisman Trophy winner, threw for just 113 yards and no touchdowns while getting picked off twice. And it was more than enough for the Sooners, thanks to 225 yards rushing on 32 carries by dynamic freshman running back Adrian Peterson.